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ABSTRACT

Data from the Social Security Administration's Retirement History Study and a supplement to the 1968 Current Population Survey are discussed in terms of the relationship between (1) family size and residence, and (2) economic and educational status. It is shown that household heads who grew up as members of large families and/or as natives of small towns or rural areas tend to have less education and are more likely to be poor than those coming from small families and/or large cities. Statistics are presented for both male- and female-headed households and for blacks, whites, and the total population. Also noted are findings regarding occupation and findings comparing size of childhood family with number of one's own subsequent children. Implications for public educational and economic policy are outlined. (Author/GC)

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Born To Be Poor: Birthplace and Number of Brothers and Sisters As Factors in Adult Poverty

by MOLLIE ORSHANSKY and JUDITH S. BRETZ*

Household heads who grew up as members of large families and/or as natives of small towns or rural areas tend to have less education and are more likely to be poor than those coming from small families and/or large cities. Data to support these conclusions have been drawn from two independent sources—a special Social Security Administration supplement to the April 1968 Current Population Survey and findings from the Retirement History Study conducted by the Social Security Administration.

IN OUR SOCIETY, economic well-being is directly related to earning capacity, and earning capacity in turn is highly associated with age and educational attainment. Accordingly, poverty is more common among the aged whose work time is largely over and the youngsters whose time has not yet come than among persons in their middle years. In like fashion, men and women without a high school diploma have a harder time keeping their families above the poverty line—particularly if the family is large—than persons who stayed in school long enough to qualify for higher-paying jobs.

We have long known that childhood in a large family as opposed to a small one could often be synonymous with growing up poor. Evidence now suggests that any such disadvantage persists into adulthood and even into old age. Unlike the only child or one with just one brother or sister, a youngster from a family with four or more brothers and sisters is apt to leave school early, have less chance to become a professional, face raising a family on an inadequate income, and stand a greater chance of a poverty-stricken old age. Such patterns of fate suggest themselves, in varying degree, for white and black alike, for both men and women, and for natives of large cities as well as those born on farms or in small towns.

There will, of course, always be some Americans who are offered less than others, in terms of a chance at the better life. Yet some at the very moment of their birth will already have forfeited some of their claim to equal opportunity by virtue of their birthplace and the number of their brothers or sisters.

Since 1947 the Census Bureau has published annual income distributions for families and unrelated individuals in the United States, classified by a variety of economic and demographic characteristics. These distributions relate to money income before taxes as reported in household interviews with a representative national sample of the population. The income statistics have been used—and no doubt abused—in a variety of ways to assess the relative economic well-being of diverse population groups. Increasingly in recent years, focus has been on the number and characteristics of the poor with a view to identifying predisposing factors commonly associated with low income status and, if possible, to suggest bases for remedial action. In point of fact, much of the ongoing work has served to quantify or corroborate facts already known rather than to discover new ones. Even at that, much of what we presumably "know" remains, like a Scotch verdict, "not proven." One reason for the moot state of some set theorems is that available data for a family (or individual) refer only to the "recap" for a given year. As such, the income data conceal fluctuations during the year and reveal nothing about what went before or is likely to come after. Some longitudinal studies have begun, but none have yet spanned the entire spectrum from childhood to old age. The annual poverty analyses share in these limitations.

The poverty definition currently used in official

* Division of Supplemental Security Studies, Office of Research and Statistics. The authors gratefully acknowledge the efforts of Gloria F. Holmes for the computer programming that created the matched data tape and for general computational assistance and the work of Barbara L. McKethan who programmed tabulations from the Retirement History Study. The article is adapted, with permission, from a paper presented in the *Proceedings of the 13th Annual Meeting of the American Statistical Association (Atlanta, Ga.), August 25–28, 1975.*

Bureau of the Census statistics is a money income criterion only. It has as its base a matrix of presumed income needs or poverty thresholds for families of different size and composition, first published by the Social Security Administration in 1965.[1] The matrix itself, however, is derived from normative concepts of outlays for food in relation to money income originally enunciated in July 1963 in an article in the BULLETIN entitled "Children of the Poor." That discussion included the following assertion:

> There is a growing awareness that as the Nation grows richer the dollar gap between the average income and the income of our poorest citizens widens. . . . When such poverty befalls families rearing children—the citizens of the future—the social consequences reach far beyond the present deprivation.[2]

Obvious enough to seem almost platitude, that assertion nevertheless remained largely a hypothesis. A subsequent article, "The Aged Negro and His Income," posited further that many aged poor do not come newly to their current destitution but merely continue on a path long evident as their manifest destiny.[3] That was but another enunciation of conventional wisdom, and conventional wisdom, to be sure, is not always wise.

Lacking confirming evidence, the statements cited may stand as utterances from an "in love with the sound of one's own words" department, for proof comes hard. A preliminary report is made here on work in progress that seems to quantify in economic terms the thesis that what happens to the child lingers on in the man. The evidence, to be sure, remains incomplete and largely circumstantial: An indisputable verdict must come only after long longitudinal study, well-designed and containing all the right questions, or from an ingenious well-designed retrospective probe. The data now under analysis, laboriously snipped from this survey and that, can suggest at most avenues warranting further inquiry. As an alternative form of outcome analysis, they can indicate only the orders of magnitude and direction of differences rather than exact dimensions—not only because the scope is limited, but because in an upward mobile and changing society the intensity of relationships will perforce change over time.

TABLE 1.—Persons with income below poverty level, by age, 1974

[Numbers in millions]

Age	All persons	Persons poor [1]	
		Number	Percent
All ages	209.3	24.3	11.6
Under 18	65.8	10.2	15.5
In families with—			
Male head	55.3	4.8	8.7
Female head	10.5	5.4	51.5
18–54 [2]	102.9	8.9	8.7
55–64	19.5	1.8	9.5
65 or older	21.1	3.3	15.7
In families	14.6	1.2	8.5
Unrelated individuals	6.5	2.1	31.8
Men	1.5	.4	26.8
Women	5.0	1.7	33.2

[1] Income of family or unrelated individual below appropriate poverty threshold for family size and composition.
[2] Includes 327,000 unrelated individuals, family heads, or wives under age 18, of whom 195,000 are poor.

Source: Bureau of the Census, "Money Income and Poverty Status of Families and Persons in the United States, 1974," *Current Population Reports*, Series P–60, No. 99, July 1975.

POVERTY STATISTICS FOR 1974

The annual poverty series, available for 1959 and subsequent years, continues to point up the young and the old as more vulnerable to poverty than persons in the middle years (table 1).[4] The numbers continue to show, despite much improvement, that children in large families are two or three times as likely to be growing up poor as children in small families; families of a head—man or woman, white or black—with little formal schooling are subject to a risk of poverty much greater than families of a head who has at least a high school diploma.

In 1974, for example, one-third of the families with five or more children under age 18 had income below the poverty level, compared with one-tenth of the families with one or two children. Among families headed by a man, 1 in 5 of the families with five or more children was poor compared with 1 in 20 of the smaller families; with a woman as head, three-fourths of the families with five or more children were poor, compared with one-third of those with one or two youngsters

[1] Mollie Orshansky, "Counting the Poor: Another Look at the Poverty Profile," *Social Security Bulletin*, January 1965.
[2] Mollie Orshansky, "Children of the Poor," *Social Security Bulletin*, July 1963.
[3] Mollie Orshansky, "The Aged Negro and His Income," *Social Security Bulletin*, February 1964.
[4] Bureau of the Census, *Current Population Reports*, Series P–60, No. 99, July 1975.

TABLE 2.—Percent of families with income below poverty level, by presence of children and sex of family head, 1974

Children under age 18	Percent poor [1]		
	All families	With male head	With female head
All families	9.2	5.7	32.5
No children	5.1	4.7	8.3
Some children	12.4	6.5	43.8
1–2	9.5	4.5	36.5
3–4	15.9	8.9	55.0
5 or more	32.7	21.3	75.3

[1] Family income below appropriate poverty threshold for family size and composition.

Source: See table 1.

TABLE 3.—Percent of families with income below poverty level, by educational attainment of head, 1974

Educational attainment	Percent poor [1]		
	All families	With male head	With female head
Head aged 35 or older	8.5	5.5	29.3
Not high school graduate	15.1	10.3	40.1
Elementary school only	16.7	12.9	37.6
Some high school	12.7	6.4	43.3
High school graduate	4.6	2.8	19.6
No college	6.0	3.4	23.0
Any college	3.1	2.2	13.1

[1] See table 2, footnote 1.

Source: See table 1.

(table 2). All told, in 1974 fewer than 1 in 10 of all families with children included as many as five or more, but youngsters from families this large accounted for 3 in 10 of all children counted poor.

In like fashion, poverty rates for families classified by educational attainment of the head ranged from 3 percent for heads completing at least 1 year of college to 17 percent for those who had at most gone through elementary school. To put it more bluntly, in our credential society, a high school diploma is almost a prerequisite to any decent-paying job.[5] In 1974, families with a head with no such diploma were three times as likely to be poor as families of a head with a diploma (table 3). And finally, familiar to any student of family income statistics is the fact of the lower income prevailing among families residing in rural areas and small towns than among those in large cities or their suburbs.

NEW QUESTIONS FROM APRIL 1968 CPS

What connection might one make between these sets of facts? Education of the parent is known to influence that of the children. It has been noted too—or surmised—that persons with higher education seem more successful in keeping the size of their family within the limits they prefer. And, as the early Social Security Administration analyses of poverty statistics suggested, children of the poor were likely to leave the parental home at an earlier age and with less education than children in more fortunate circumstances.[6] It seems reasonable to postulate that the larger the family, the less likely it is that children will get to college or perhaps even to finish high school. It seems plausible, too, that children born in areas where families tend to be relatively large and income small—as in small towns or rural areas—might get less opportunity for an education than children more selective in their choice of a parental home!

To investigate such a possibility, the Social Security Administration arranged to add two questions on the April 1968 Current Population Survey: Household heads (who by definition must either head a primary family or be living as a primary unrelated individual) were asked how many brothers and sisters they had when they were growing up and where they were born, as to both geography and degree of urbanization. Other items such as current residence, occupation, education, and the like were already being ascertained as a matter of course.

It has taken a long time—too long—for the information to be coded, and the analysis is still not completed. Moreover, in order to associate 1967 family income with the new questions, only heads also interviewed in March 1968 could be studied. The number of sample households was thus reduced to three-fourths the number in a normal CPS, and there were problems of appropriate weights for the households matched.[7] Then there are the exclusions: Most men normally be-

[5] See Morris Cobern, Claude Salem, and Selma Mushkin, *Indicators of Educational Outcome, Fall 1972*, Department of Health, Education, and Welfare, National Center for Educational Statistics, 1973.

[6] Mollie Orshansky, "Recounting the Poor: A Five-Year Review," *Social Security Bulletin*, April 1966.

[7] For this preliminary report, the assigned weight for each household matched in the March–April 1968 tapes represents the March CPS weight expanded by 1.33.

come head of a household or a family—by Census Bureau's rather old-fashioned mechanical definition—and remain so throughout most of their adult lives. On the other hand, many women are listed as wives rather than heads, so that data for women in this study are incomplete. In March 1974, for example, the designation "household head" would so identify 5 out of 6 of all men aged 18 or older—two-thirds of those under age 35, and 95 percent of those aged 35 or older. By contrast, the same designation includes only about 1 in 4 of all women aged 18 or older, ranging from only 1 in 6 for those 18–34 to about 4 in 5 of those 55 or older.

From hindsight (inspired even more by seeing the results) it is clear, too, that the classification of urbanization may be imprecise. The interpretation of the categories will necessarily change with the passage of time. The respondent was asked:

Was _____ born in—
- a suburb near a large city
- a large city (250,000 or more)
- a middle or small-size city (50,000–250,000)
- a small city (under 50,000)
- the open country but not on a farm
- on a farm

One need not be bothered by the fact that few persons will know the "true" population at the time of their birth—the answers serve only as a crude sorting device. There are, however, other difficulties with the answers to the questions. The "standard metropolitan statistical area" concept of inner city and suburb is new. Many adults—in particular, the older ones—reporting birthplace as in "a suburb near a large city," obviously were referring to the nearest city they could think of to identify what may well have been the outskirts of a small town. Others really do mean the suburb surrounding a large city. Moreover, the resources and opportunities in our largest cities today may not bear the same relationship to smaller places that they once had.

SIZE OF CHILDHOOD FAMILY AND ADULT POVERTY

Households Headed by Men

Despite such limitations, the study results still shine through. Data from other special surveys and the Decennial Census of 1970 are also being studied to test some of the findings but cannot all be detailed here. This is a report of work still in progress. Starting first with the men: Ten percent of all male primary individuals and family heads were poor in 1967, under the official income criteria that take account of family size and composition.[8] Classified by place of birth and number of brothers and sisters in the childhood home, the proportion of male household heads in poverty ranged from 4 percent for those born in a large city, and with no brothers or sisters or only one in the childhood family, to 20 percent for men born on a farm and growing up with at least six brothers and sisters, as the illustrative figures from table 4 below indicate:

Place of birth	Percent poor among male household heads, by number of siblings			
	0–1	2–3	4–5	6 or more
All ages	7	8	11	14
Large city	4	5	7	7
Middle-size city	5	5	6	9
Small city	6	6	8	10
Suburb near large city	5	5	5	9
Open country	10	10	16	15
Farm	16	15	18	20

Some of these differences obviously are not in themselves statistically significant, but the fact that the pattern holds more or less for family heads and unrelated individuals separately and for the three broad age groups used for summarization—namely, under age 35, aged 35–54, and aged 55 and older—is significant. Even more revealing is the fact that the incidence of poverty in each subgroup tended to rise as the reported number of brothers and sisters rose (tables 5 and 7).

Households Headed by Women

A similar pattern holds, too, with just enough exceptions to make it look good, for women as well as men, young as well as old, even though

[8] Data on poverty status for 1967 as reported here do not replicate statistics previously published—as in Census Report P–60, No. 68. The present analysis is limited only to heads of primary families and primary individuals in the Current Population Survey sample for both March and April 1968. Moreover, the March 1968 tape itself has been corrected by SSA to remove some observed errors in income codes.

TABLE 4.—Poverty among male household heads, March 1968: Percentage distribution and percent poor in 1967, by place of birth, educational attainment, and number of siblings

Educational attainment [1] and number of siblings	Male household heads, by urbanization of place of birth [2]						
	Total	Large city	Middle- or small-size city	Small city	Suburb near large city	Open country	Farm
	All male household heads						
Total number (in thousands)	43,375	8,608	4,940	14,205	2,539	3,319	9,765
Educational attainment, total percent	100	100	100	100	100	100	100
Elementary school only	29	16	17	24	26	43	49
Some high school	17	17	17	18	17	19	16
High school graduate	30	32	35	32	29	25	24
Any college	24	35	31	26	28	13	11
Number of siblings, total percent	100	100	100	100	100	100	100
0–1	23	33	29	23	39	16	12
2–3	30	34	34	32	28	26	24
4–5	21	18	20	21	17	25	23
6 or more	26	15	17	24	16	33	41
	Percent poor in 1967 [3]						
All households	10	5	6	8	7	13	18
Educational attainment:							
Elementary school only	21	15	17	17	16	22	27
Some high school	8	5	5	7	6	11	13
High school graduate	5	3	3	4	4	4	9
Any college	4	3	4	4	2	3	4
Number of siblings:							
0–1	7	4	5	6	8	10	16
2–3	8	5	5	6	5	10	15
4–5	11	7	6	8	5	16	18
6 or more	14	7	9	10	9	15	20

[1] Defined as highest grade completed: Elementary, 8 years of schooling or less; some high school, 9–11 years; high school graduate, 12 years; any college, 1 or more years.

[2] Population in large city, 250,000 or more; middle- or small-size city, 50,000–250,000; and small city, less than 50,000 persons.

[3] See table 2, footnote 1.

the data for women are incomplete, excluding as they do all married women with the husband present.

Presumably, young women who are family heads—and in Census parlance this means women with no husband present in a family of two or more persons—by that fact alone already form an adversely selected group. It is likely that young women left to bring up children without a father —these days not usually a reference to young widowed mothers—may have been unfortunate or unwise in their choice of a life partner. As a result, perhaps statistics for the young women must be overlooked or at least looked over with skepticism. The findings for older women as household heads cannot be so readily dismissed. For women in later life to be minus a husband finally through death, if not already for other reasons, must be taken almost as an anticipated stage in the life cycle. The large number of elderly women living alone in poverty—and they constitute today just about half of the elderly poor—have long been one of our major policy concerns. To them must now be added the growing problem of the young family with children but with no father in the home. Increasingly, women of all ages, whether by choice or necessity, now assume major responsibility for themselves and their families. Whatever the resultant satisfactions or disappointments to the women themselves or their children, there is no doubt that the generally inferior income status of a woman's household poses a challenge for public policy, the more so because their number is increasing.

Between March 1960 and March 1975, households consisting of families headed by a woman, or a woman living as an individual, increased in number from 1 in every 5 American households to 1 in every 4. Even more important, households likely to be poor showed the greatest rise: Women living by themselves represented 15 percent of all households in 1975 but only 10 percent in 1960. One out of 6 of all families with children in 1975 had a woman for a head, as did 1 out of 5 of families with 5 or more children—roughly twice the proportions prevailing in 1960.

TABLE 5.—Place of birth and number of siblings: Percentage distribution of household heads, by age and sex, March 1968

Age of head and number of siblings	Household heads, by urbanization of place of birth						
	Total	Large city	Middle- or small-size city	Small city	Suburb near large city	Open country	Farm
	Male head						
Total number, under 35 (in thousands)	10,874	2,551	1,882	3,742	635	802	1,861
Total percent	100	100	100	100	100	100	100
Number of siblings:							
0-1	29	40	34	26	38	18	15
2-3	35	35	36	37	33	30	30
4-5	18	16	16	19	16	23	21
6 or more	18	9	14	18	13	28	34
Total number, 35-54 (in thousands)	18,651	3,455	2,182	6,266	1,134	1,323	3,221
Total percent	100	100	100	100	100	100	100
Number of siblings:							
0-1	25	34	29	24	35	16	13
2-3	30	35	34	31	31	25	25
4-5	20	17	20	21	17	24	23
6 or more	25	14	17	24	17	35	40
Total number, 55 or older (in thousands)	13,849	2,201	1,206	4,197	769	1,194	4,282
Total percent	100	100	100	100	100	100	100
Number of siblings:							
0-1	18	23	20	18	46	10	10
2-3	26	32	31	28	21	23	22
4-5	24	22	25	26	16	27	24
6 or more	32	22	23	30	16	38	44
	Female head						
Total number, under 35 (in thousands)	1,683	457	281	821	134	97	192
Total percent	100	100	100	100	100	100	100
Number of siblings:							
0-1	30	35	32	28	57	20	14
2-3	33	37	39	33	28	33	20
4-5	17	12	16	21	*	26	24
6 or more	19	16	13	21	7	13	42
Total number, 35-54 (in thousands)	199	780	349	1,041	190	284	615
Total percent	100	100	100	100	100	100	100
Number of siblings:							
0-1	25	35	26	23	47	19	14
2-3	28	31	33	30	17	29	21
4-5	21	17	23	22	17	17	22
6 or more	26	17	18	25	19	35	43
Total number, 55 or older (in thousands)	6,658	1,068	605	2,012	394	599	1,981
Total percent	100	100	100	100	100	100	100
Number of siblings:							
0-1	18	26	19	17	49	13	9
2-3	26	31	33	29	19	23	21
4-5	23	21	22	23	16	27	22
6 or more	33	22	26	29	16	37	49

As a consequence, both the number and characteristics of the poverty population underwent change in this period. On the basis of 1974 income, a total of nearly 10 million families and unrelated individuals were counted poor. If, however, all household types had increased in number at the same rate since 1960—with nothing else changing—there might have been a million fewer poor households in 1974. More important is the fact that the "extra" poor households were all headed by a woman. Accordingly, of the households actually poor in 1974, 5.6 million were headed by a woman, a third more than the 4.2 million that might have been. The total number of persons counted poor in 1974 included half a million more aged poor women than there might have been, except for the growing tendency among women of all ages to move out on their own.

The data in table 6 illustrate in summary fashion the actual number of poor households in 1974, compared with the number expected if the distribution of families and individuals by sex,

age of head, and number of children under age 18 could be standardized. The distributions were assumed to be unchanged from that prevailing 15 years earlier but subject to the poverty rates by family type actually prevailing in 1974. It is worth recalling here that, by the numbers, a woman, whatever her age and family status, has a higher risk of poverty than a man in a similar situation.

In the unliberated days of yesteryear, the income position of an older woman reflected in large measure how well her husband had been able to provide for her as a wife during his lifetime or as a widow after his death. In some measure, it may still do so. That fact, early on, led to the postulation that, a woman, unlike a man, had two chances at poverty—she could marry into it or just make it on her own. There appears to be a third way that works for women as well as men. Like a man, a woman, early in her life, can settle her economic status in old age by choosing the right number of brothers and sisters and the place of residence to which the stork will deliver her, as the figures below illustrate.

Age and place of birth	Percent poor among female household heads, by number of siblings			
	0–1	2–3	4–5	6 or more
Family head:				
Under 35	41	48	57	59
35–54	25	24	31	42
Unrelated individuals 55 or older	43	48	52	61
Place of birth:				
Large city	38	40	39	49
Small city	43	46	51	58
Farm or open country	45	57	60	66

Size of Childhood Family and Educational Attainment

Although time and space preclude detailing all the findings here, it should be evident that the relationship between prevalence of poverty among adults and the number of brothers and sisters in their childhood family is neither fortuitous nor obscure. A search for explanatory variables seems in order and at least one does present itself. It is educational attainment, itself correlated with income and poverty risk, that provides the link between the size of the childhood family and the adulthood income. Among men aged 55 or older who were household heads in 1968, for example, half had not gone beyond elementary school and only 1 in 7 went to college. But the percentages change dramatically with family size: With no more than one brother or sister in the childhood family, 37 percent of the heads had gone no farther than the eighth grade and 1 in 4 had been to college. Of those older men growing up with six or more brothers or sisters, 2 out of 3 failed to get past grade school and only 1 in 12 got to college.

These are, to be sure, older men and things are better now, aren't they? They may be, but the same pattern persists except that all groups have more education than used to be the case, as the following summary figures for household heads suggest.

TABLE 6.—Trends in living arrangements and poverty: Actual and theoretical profile in 1974[1] for distribution by type of household standardized as of 1959

Type of household and age of head	Number (in millions)		Percentage distribution	
	Actual	Theoretical	Actual	Theoretical
	Households poor in 1974 [2]			
Total [3]	9.9	8.7	100.0	100.0
Male head	4.4	4.5	44.0	51.6
Under 65	3.4	3.5	33.9	40.1
Unrelated individual	1.2	.8	12.3	9.1
Family head	2.2	2.7	21.6	31.0
Number of children:				
None	.6	.6	5.8	6.6
1–2	.7	.7	6.9	8.4
3–4	.6	.8	6.0	9.7
5 or more	.3	.6	2.9	6.3
65 or older	1.0	1.0	10.1	11.5
Unrelated individual	.4	.4	3.9	4.3
Family head	.6	.6	6.2	7.2
Female head	5.5	4.2	56.0	48.4
Under 65	3.7	2.9	37.7	33.2
Unrelated individual	1.5	1.4	15.5	15.6
Family head	2.2	1.5	22.2	17.6
Number of children:				
None	.1	.1	1.3	1.6
1–2	1.2	.7	11.6	8.2
3–4	.6	.5	6.6	5.2
5 or more	.3	.2	2.8	2.6
65 or older	1.8	1.3	18.3	15.2
Unrelated individual	1.7	1.1	16.9	13.1
Family head	.1	.2	1.4	2.1
	Persons in poor households in 1974 [2]			
Total, all ages	24.3	25.1	100.0	100.0
In male households	12.5	14.7	51.5	58.6
In female households	11.8	10.4	48.5	41.4
Under 18	10.2	11.1	42.0	44.3
In male families	4.8	7.2	19.8	28.9
In female families	5.4	3.8	22.2	15.4
18–64 [4]	10.8	11.0	44.3	44.0
65 or older	3.3	2.9	13.6	11.7
In families	1.2	1.4	5.1	5.6
Unrelated individuals	2.1	1.5	8.5	6.1
Men	.4	.4	1.6	1.5
Women	1.7	1.1	6.9	4.6

[1] "Actual" poor represents number designated poor in the March 1975 Current Population Survey; "theoretical" poor represents number that would be so designated with the distribution by household type standardized as of 1959 but with the poverty rates by type prevailing in 1974.
[2] See table 1, footnote 1.
[3] Represents families and unrelated individuals.
[4] Includes persons under age 18 living as an unrelated individual, family head, or wife of a head.

Number of siblings	Percent of male household heads, not high school graduates, by age		
	Under 35	35–54	55 or older
All ages	27	41	67
0–1	14	25	52
2–3	21	33	58
4–5	34	49	70
6 or more	52	62	80

Another indicator of how size of family affects educational opportunity is the fact that, all told, nearly half the household heads under age 35 with fewer than two brothers or sisters had attended college, compared with only a tenth of those with six or more siblings (table 7). Admittedly, some of the younger men, particularly those not yet family heads, will go on to get more schooling than they now have, but it is unlikely that the differentials already evident will disappear altogether.

When the men who are household heads are classified further as heads of families and unrelated individuals, the pattern of "the more brothers and sisters the less education" repeats sometimes even more sharply. It is evident for women household heads in each category as well. And for each subgroup the corresponding poverty rates behave as one would expect—the more brothers and sisters in childhood, the less education, and, accordingly, the greater the likelihood of low income in adult life (tables 8 and 9).

No standard errors of estimate nor tests of statistical significance have yet been computed, but statistical patterns replicated over time, space, and age must be considered presumptive evidence of association as good as any tests. Statistical continuity is no accident.

PLACE OF BIRTH AND RESIDENCE

The data so far tabulated suggested, too, that being born in a small town is an added high-risk factor as far as educational attainment is concerned and carries an accompanying greater risk of adult poverty. The extent of relationship is somewhat constrained by the particular urbanization classes used in the questionnaire. Changing residence patterns may now impose greater hazards on youngsters born in a ghetto area in the central city of a metropolitan area than on those born in its suburbs. Children born in very large cities may no longer have the edge on natives of middle-sized cities. In addition, enough moving about by families occurs today so that perhaps questions on place of birth need supplementation with place of residence during school age. We must acknowledge probable differences in the quality of education offered from place to place that may affect both motivation to continue schooling and eventual economic performance. One can hope that such considerations may be taken into account in future research.

For now, it seems safe to affirm that, despite the limitations noted, persons born in rural areas and small towns continue by and large to receive less formal schooling—age for age, sex for sex, family size for family size—than persons born in large cities. This difference can be illustrated for men under age 35 who are family heads—the "best" group in the current sample with respect to completeness and representativeness and the group one might expect to have benefited most from the general upward mobility in the greening of America. With no brothers or sisters or only one, more than half of those born in a large city had attended college, compared with less than a third of the young men born in open country or on a farm. By contrast, with as many as six brothers or sisters, only a fifth of the young male family heads from large cities attended college and only 6 percent of those born in a rural place. The figures below are for men under age 35 who headed a primary family in March–April 1968.

Place of birth	Male family heads under age 35, by number of siblings							
	Percent not high school graduates				Percent with any college			
	0–1	2–3	4–5	6 or more	0–1	2–3	4–5	6 or more
Large city	10	18	30	34	52	42	26	18
Middle-size city	13	18	28	48	53	32	35	12
Small city	14	22	30	52	45	35	22	10
Suburb near large city	24	17	34	(1)	36	47	26	(1)
Open country or farm	22	32	44	59	27	21	16	6

[1] Base too small to calculate percentages.

EDUCATION AND RACE

Clearly, race must be considered in any analysis inasmuch as it continues even today to affect

TABLE 7.—Urbanization of birthplace, educational attainment, and number of siblings: Percentage distribution of male household heads and percent poor in 1967, by age, March 1968

Place of birth [1] and educational attainment [2]	Age of male head, by number of siblings											
	Under 35				35–54				55 or older			
	0–1	2–3	4–5	6 or more	0–1	2–3	4–5	6 or more	0–1	2–3	4–5	6 or more
	All male household heads											
All places, total percent	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0
Elementary school only	4.7	6.7	13.2	24.0	10.7	16.2	27.3	39.1	36.9	41.9	54.4	65.1
Some high school	9.7	14.6	20.3	28.1	14.1	16.9	21.5	22.5	15.5	16.5	15.8	14.4
High school graduate	37.9	42.7	43.0	38.4	35.3	35.4	32.7	26.4	23.3	22.4	17.5	12.0
Any college	47.6	36.0	23.5	9.5	39.9	31.5	18.5	11.9	24.3	19.2	12.3	8.5
Large city, total percent	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0
Elementary school only	2.3	3.2	8.6	11.5	5.4	9.5	14.7	23.5	27.7	31.7	44.5	48.5
Some high school	8.1	14.1	22.7	21.7	11.2	16.4	21.8	26.6	17.0	17.5	21.1	21.7
High school graduate	36.0	40.6	42.3	48.6	33.0	33.3	37.0	33.6	27.3	22.9	17.2	15.9
Any college	53.5	42.2	26.3	18.1	50.4	40.8	25.6	16.2	28.0	27.9	17.2	13.0
Middle- or small-size city, total percent	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0
Elementary only	4.4	2.7	9.7	17.4	6.2	7.6	14.8	30.3	26.8	32.7	39.2	51.8
Some high school	8.8	14.5	17.2	28.9	12.3	16.6	24.6	26.6	14.9	17.7	19.7	21.6
High school graduate	33.3	44.5	38.6	40.7	38.3	37.8	39.3	29.4	25.9	28.9	23.9	17.2
Any college	53.5	38.3	34.5	12.9	43.2	38.0	21.3	13.6	32.4	20.7	17.2	9.4
Small city, total percent	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0
Elementary school only	4.2	7.2	12.7	20.6	8.8	14.2	25.0	31.7	29.9	37.1	46.3	57.9
Some high school	9.9	14.0	17.1	31.7	14.9	16.4	21.3	23.9	17.4	17.6	16.3	16.5
High school graduate	38.2	42.3	47.4	37.8	35.6	38.0	34.2	28.8	24.8	24.4	21.8	14.5
Any college	47.7	36.5	22.8	10.0	40.6	31.4	19.4	15.5	28.0	20.9	15.6	11.1
Suburb near large city, total percent	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0
Elementary school only	9.8	4.7	6.7	22.1	11.7	17.5	23.9	32.0	48.4	41.9	52.1	54.5
Some high school	13.8	11.7	25.0	33.5	17.9	17.2	19.7	23.5	11.1	13.2	14.9	15.9
High school graduate	36.3	34.6	39.8	39.9	35.6	29.6	33.9	30.1	19.5	18.2	18.8	14.1
Any college	40.1	49.1	28.4	4.4	34.7	35.7	22.5	14.4	20.9	26.7	14.2	15.2
Open country, total percent	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0
Elementary school only	12.6	14.3	18.0	34.2	27.2	27.3	44.3	46.1	48.8	51.1	64.6	75.8
Some high school	16.9	21.5	35.1	26.1	19.6	21.1	17.4	24.0	15.4	20.3	10.0	11.0
High school graduate	43.3	48.9	28.8	32.6	31.4	35.0	25.1	23.4	15.7	17.8	16.4	8.7
Any college	27.2	15.3	18.1	7.0	21.7	18.6	13.1	6.5	20.1	10.8	9.0	4.5
Farm, total percent	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0
Elementary school only	7.9	13.6	21.8	32.6	29.3	31.1	40.4	52.7	51.9	56.7	68.5	74.3
Some high school	9.5	15.2	16.7	26.2	16.3	17.2	22.1	18.3	14.1	13.4	13.6	10.6
High school graduate	53.1	46.3	47.1	35.9	38.3	34.4	26.1	21.2	20.7	19.0	11.7	9.4
Any college	29.5	24.9	14.5	5.3	16.1	17.3	11.4	7.8	13.3	10.9	6.2	5.8
	Percent poor in 1967 [3]											
All places	5.8	6.5	9.4	13.8	3.9	5.1	7.3	7.9	15.5	13.8	16.5	20.0
Large city	6.4	4.2	7.9	8.5	2.1	4.1	3.8	4.3	8.2	9.1	11.4	11.1
Middle- or small-size city	4.7	3.3	5.9	10.1	1.3	2.9	5.3	6.5	15.4	12.3	8.9	13.8
Small city	6.0	6.3	8.7	11.9	3.9	4.4	5.5	7.3	13.1	11.3	12.0	13.0
Suburb near large city	3.7	7.2	5.0	14.1	4.2	1.9	1.6	4.8	15.9	13.6	10.9	10.5
Open country	8.4	10.0	9.6	17.2	8.9	7.6	10.2	11.0	14.3	15.5	25.9	20.0
Farm	5.9	13.6	16.4	18.7	10.2	9.6	13.7	12.4	29.1	20.8	23.4	28.5

[1] See table 4, footnote 2.
[2] See table 4, footnote 1.
[3] See table 2, footnote 1.

educational opportunty. Race is also associated with place of birth and size of family, factors that in themselves can influence the years of schooling a youngster is likely to attain. In the present investigation, analyses are still under way, and the relatively small numbers of household heads other than white impede some of the comparisons by age, size of childhood family, and place of birth. These qualifications aside, the data do confirm what one would anticipate a priori: Age for age, blacks received less education than white persons (tables 10 and 11). In addition, the adverse effect of being born into a large family in a small town on chances for children to attain higher education is apparent for blacks as well as for whites. Among men under age 35 who were household heads in March 1968, for example, 1 in 6 of the black men had completed at least 1 year

TABLE 8.—Urbanization of birthplace, number of siblings, and educational attainment: Percentage distribution of female household heads and percent poor in 1967, by age, March 1968

Age and educational attainment [1]	Female head										
	Number of siblings					Urbanization of place of birth [2]					
	Total	0–1	2–3	4–5	6 or more	Large city	Middle- or small size city	Small city	Suburb or large city	Open country	Farm
	All female household heads										
Under 35, total percent	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0
Elementary school only	11.0	4.7	6.1	14.3	26.6	6.0	7.2	15.7	3.4	13.0	20.2
Some high school	23.0	17.8	19.3	24.6	36.2	22.5	23.6	20.2	18.6	36.4	27.2
High school graduate	37.7	39.5	40.0	40.3	28.5	36.6	34.5	38.8	39.0	42.1	39.3
Any college	28.2	37.9	34.6	20.8	8.3	34.8	34.7	25.3	39.0	8.5	12.3
35–54, total percent	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0
Elementary school only	25.8	13.8	17.9	32.3	40.6	12.5	20.5	24.1	14.2	38.6	46.1
Some high school	21.3	20.5	20.4	18.7	25.2	23.4	18.2	20.1	24.2	26.2	19.9
High school graduate	34.6	37.2	39.2	37.7	24.8	42.7	39.9	35.5	37.4	27.8	22.0
Any college	18.3	28.5	22.6	11.3	9.4	21.4	21.4	20.3	24.2	7.4	12.0
55 or older, total percent	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0
Elementary school only	50.7	37.2	42.5	52.1	63.3	42.6	44.9	43.3	42.0	62.2	62.6
Some high school	15.1	13.3	16.8	16.6	13.7	16.5	16.5	16.1	12.8	16.3	13.1
High school graduate	19.3	25.0	23.6	19.2	13.0	24.8	20.8	23.0	28.3	10.0	13.2
Any college	14.9	24.5	17.0	12.1	10.0	16.1	17.8	17.6	16.8	11.6	11.2
	Percent poor in 1967 [3]										
Under 35	40.9	31.2	38.5	49.0	53.0	33.7	47.2	41.3	35.9	39.9	51.3
35–54	28.3	22.8	23.1	27.2	39.9	19.5	25.4	25.4	27.8	38.7	41.4
55 or older	44.0	37.5	41.0	42.6	51.0	33.3	36.3	41.6	42.4	47.[illegible]	53.8

[1] See table 4, footnote 1.
[2] See table 4, footnote 2
[3] See table 2, footnote 1.

TABLE 9.—Poverty among primary families and individuals, by age and sex of head and number of siblings, 1967

Age of head and number of siblings	Percent poor in 1967 [1]						
	Total	Male head			Female head		
		Total	Family head	Unrelated individual	Total	Family head	Unrelated individual
Total	16.2	10.1	8.8	25.8	39.2	32.3	44.3
Number of siblings:							
0–1	12.0	7.3	7.9	18.3	31.4	27.7	33.9
2–3	13.3	7.9	6.7	23.2	35.6	29.5	39.6
4–5	17.0	11.1	10.0	26.1	38.9	30.6	42.4
6 or more	22.2	14.2	12.6	35.7	48.5	39.3	55.9
Under 35	12.5	8.2	7.8	10.7	40.9	30.3	19.1
Number of siblings:							
0–1	9.4	5.8	5.3	6.3	31.2	40.5	17.5
2–3	10.7	6.5	5.9	13.0	38.5	47.7	17.6
4–5	14.4	9.4	9.4	13.4	49.0	57.3	28.4
6 or more	19.3	13.8	13.7		53.0	80.6	
35–54	9.4	6.2	5.8	12.6	28.3	30.6	23.0
Number of siblings:							
0–1	6.[illegible]	3.9	3.5	11.7	22.8	24.7	19.7
2–3	7.5	5.1	4.8	10.6	23.1	24.4	20.6
4–5	10.2	7.3	6.9	15.5	27.2	30.[illegible]	20.3
6 or more	13.6	8.9	8.5	17.6	39.9	41.6	32.9
55 or older	25.6	16.8	13.9	38.1	43.9	24.2	51.9
Number of siblings:							
0–1	22.5	13.5	12.8	33.0	37.5	20.0	42.7
2–3	22.7	13.[illegible]	10.9	35.4	41.0	23.6	47.6
4–5	24.5	16.5	14.1	34.6	42.0	19.9	51.9
6 or more	30.4	20.0	16.7	48.0	51.0	29.5	60.7

[1] See table 1, footnote 1.

TABLE 10.– Race, number of siblings, and educational attainment of head: Percentage distribution of household heads and percent poor in 1967, by sex

Educational attainment [1]	Male household head, by number of siblings					Female household head, by number of siblings				
	Total	0-1	2-3	4-5	6 or more	Total	0-1	2-3	4-5	6 or more
	All heads									
All races, total number (in thousands)	48,473	10,181	13,090	9,088	11,055	11,630	2,480	3,189	2,470	3,301
Total percent	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0
Elementary school only	28.9	15.2	20.5	34.1	46.9	38.0	22.9	29.2	42.3	54.2
Some high school	17.1	13.1	16.1	19.1	20.2	18.0	16.6	18.3	18.1	18.7
High school graduate	30.0	33.2	34.0	29.4	22.7	26.2	31.9	30.8	26.6	17.4
Any college	24.1	38.5	29.4	17.3	10.1	17.8	28.6	21.7	12.9	9.7
White, total number (in thousands)	39,619	9,304	12,241	8,302	9,363	9,894	2,113	2,748	2,098	2,734
Total percent	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0
Elementary school only	27.1	13.5	19.0	32.9	45.7	36.0	21.1	27.3	40.5	52.0
Some high school	16.9	12.4	16.0	19.0	20.4	16.4	15.5	17.0	17.3	17.5
High school graduate	30.8	33.8	34.4	30.4	23.5	27.9	34.4	32.2	27.8	18.7
Any college	25.2	40.3	30.5	17.6	10.4	19.7	31.8	23.4	14.4	10.8
Black, total number (in thousands)	3,358	606	703	655	1,302	1,769	356	425	346	642
Total percent	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0
Elementary school only	49.2	35.7	46.2	50.6	57.3	49.6	37.1	42.1	52.6	59.8
Some high school	20.4	22.9	19.1	21.5	19.8	27.1	26.8	26.6	24.3	23.3
High school graduate	20.5	24.4	25.9	19.4	16.1	16.1	17.4	20.2	17.9	11.7
Any college	9.9	17.0	9.8	8.5	6.8	7.3	8.7	11.1	5.2	5.2
	Percent poor in 1967 [2]									
All races, total	10.1	7.3	7.9	11.1	14.2	30.2	31.4	35.6	38.9	48.5
Elementary school only	21.3	22.9	20.2	21.4	22.3	50.5	54.4	53.9	52.6	58.6
Some high school	7.8	6.8	7.5	8.8	9.5	40.2	34.0	40.0	40.0	44.5
High school graduate	4.5	4.6	4.3	5.1	5.8	26.3	24.0	26.4	25.1	30.3
Any college	3.6	3.7	3.7	3.7	5.4	21.8	19.7	20.1	20.4	31.5
White, total	8.5	6.2	6.8	9.6	11.9	25.5	27.6	32.8	35.2	44.7
Elementary school only	18.6	19.8	17.4	18.4	19.0	52.3	49.4	51.1	49.5	55.4
Some high school	7.0	6.3	6.2	7.8	7.5	44.6	26.5	35.7	33.1	30.5
High school graduate	4.4	4.1	4.0	4.5	5.2	23.9	21.7	24.4	23.7	26.3
Any college	3.7	3.4	3.7	3.8	4.8	22.0	19.9	20.8	19.6	32.1
Black, total	28.0	20.8	26.3	30.5	31.5	59.6	55.9	62.5	62.4	65.6
Elementary school only	41.3	37.6	39.2	45.5	41.6	69.2	70.5	64.8	68.7	71.5
Some high school	20.9	11.3	27.6	18.4	24.4	59.3	51.2	57.2	70.2	63.1
High school graduate	12.3	11.4	9.2	12.6	11.8	48.1	41.9	31.6	40.0	48.1
Any college	9.0					20.2				

[1] See table 4, footnote 1.

[2] See table 2, footnote 1.

of college—only half the proportion among the corresponding group of white men (table 12). Further classification by number of brothers and sisters and by urbanization of birthplace yields results illustrated below.

Number of siblings and race	Male household heads under age 35, by place of birth					
	Percent not high school graduates			Percent with any college		
	Large city	Small city	Open country or farm	Large city	Small city	Open country or farm
0-3:						
Black	26	33	51	25	27	13
White	13	18	26	50	42	25
4 or more:						
Black	38	45	67	16	14	3
White	31	40	51	24	17	11

SIZE OF CHILDHOOD FAMILY AND OCCUPATION

With such pronounced differences in amount of formal schooling received by household heads, depending on the size of the place and the family into which they were born, one would logically expect large differences in occupational patterns associated with these characteristics, and indeed they do appear. From the March 1968 CPS questionnaire it is possible to classify household heads by occupation of longest job held in 1967 for those who worked any time during the year. To avoid overstating or misstating the case some information was not used: Only men under age 55 were included in this portion of the analysis because substantially all would still be in the

TABLE 11.—Poverty among primary families, by sex and race of head, and number of siblings, 1967

Age and number of siblings	Percent poor in 1967 [1]			
	Male head		Female head	
	White	Black	White	Black
All ages	7.4	26.7	24.7	57.5
Number of siblings:				
0–1	5.1	19.7	19.9	55.8
2–3	5.8	25.5	23.6	51.2
4–5	8.6	30.5	22.7	60.3
6 or more	10.5	29.3	31.0	61.2
Under 35	6.6	21.2	41.1	67.0
Number of siblings:				
0–1	4.9	12.4	29.1	60.8
2–3	5.3	17.4	45.2	
4–5	7.9	26.1	46.2	72.3
6 or more	11.2	25.8	47.4	
35–54	4.7	21.5	21.9	57.5
Number of siblings:				
0–1	2.6	16.5	17.5	48.0
2–3	3.8	24.2	15.6	59.5
4–5	6.0	21.3	22.5	61.2
6 or more	6.9	23.2	32.7	
55 or older	11.9	39.2	20.8	44.2
Number of siblings:				
0–1	10.8	32.4	16.6	38.4
2–3	9.6	37.1	20.8	
4–5	12.2	47.9	16.4	46.8
6 or more	14.3	39.5	26.0	

[1] See table 1, footnote 1.

labor force. The presentation is further restricted only to white men because, as is well known, a pattern of discrimination independent of education may still operate to limit access of black men to some preferred jobs. Women, black or white, are excluded altogether inasmuch as the missing occupational data mix for wives might differ from that of women heading their own household in the absence of a husband.

Among white men who were household heads under age 35 and working any time during 1967, the proportion classed as professional workers or managers ranges from 44 percent of those born in a large city, with no more than one brother or sister, to only 12 percent of those born on a farm and having six or more brothers and sisters. Even within the economically more favored group from small families, those born in the largest cities were more likely to end up in a white-collar job than those coming from rural areas. Working on a farm was, in the main, restricted to persons born on one. Farm ownership was more likely to be the lot of an only child, or a man having only one sibling, than a member of a larger family. Obviously an only child has a better chance to inherit the family farm—and not have to invest the large amount of capital it takes to buy one. Table 13 illustrates the influence of a man's birthplace and the size of his childhood family on "what he would be when he grew up."

Obviously, not every man can or should enter the professions or the other so-called white-collar jobs: Some may be limited by aptitude and others by their desire. All the world's work must be done and it all merits doing! What is difficult to accept is that, almost automatically by circumstance of birth, some are selected as our doctors or lawyers while others are predestined as solely "hewers of wood and drawers of water." A cherished goal of our society is the element of choice of one's lifework with all the monetary and psychic rewards such choice may entail.

SIZE OF CHILDHOOD FAMILY AND NUMBER OF OWN CHILDREN

One additional finding warrants mention in this quick rundown. How good a level of living is possible with a given amount of income depends in part on how many persons the income must support. The poverty income thresholds officially used as rough indexes of adequacy take account of family size and composition. In young families, the number of dependent children is a critical factor associated with poverty status. As discussed here, the focus has been on the size of the family in which the household head grew up. Information was not obtained on how many children these heads themselves have had, nor how many more were yet to come before their families were complete. Only the number of "own" children (of the head or wife) under age 18 and still at home is known.

In young families, namely those with a head under age 35, it is reasonable to assume that the children still there are representative of the number ever born. Few children will already have left home except through death or divorce. Few are likely to have already gone off as young adults to take a job or set up households of their own. From the number of "own" children still present in the families of men under age 35, one must conclude that it is the young men who are themselves from large families who tend to have fathered the most

children. It could be that some young men from smaller families, having spent a longer period at school, merely have delayed starting their family and will eventually catch up, but that is not likely to reverse the group finding.[9]

Even more striking and more dismaying is the finding for young women. Women under age 35, listed as head of a family and thus with no husband present, have more children than men of the same age whose marriage is still intact, as the distributions of the number of "own" children in relation to size of childhood family suggest.

Number of own children present	Family heads under age 35, by number of siblings							
	White				Black			
	Men		Women		Men		Women	
	0–3	4 or more	0–3	4 or more	0–3	4 or more	0–3	4 or more
Total percent	100	100	100	100	100	100	100	100
None	23	16	9	7	25	15	4	7
1–2	54	53	65	52	47	49	45	35
3–4	20	25	20	29	20	21	31	35
5 or more	3	6	5	12	8	15	20	23

Such findings replicate those found in an earlier and more sophisticated analysis of fertility. Cumulative fertility rates were one-fourth greater, for example, among women who were mothers in 1960 but no longer living with a husband than among those married and still living with a husband.[10] They impel reiteration of an earlier speculation on the relation between too little income, too many children, and the break-up of a marriage. The figures remain old-fashioned. They suggest that, if a woman is to bring up children, they will all fare better with a man to share the financial responsibility. Presumably, in modern times, he need not be officially designated as husband, so long as the relationship is financially meaningful.

[9] See, for example, the parallel relationship on childhood family size to number of own children in Thomas Tissue, *Patterns of Aging on Welfare*, California Human Relations Agency, July 1972, tables 4–10.

[10] John C. Beresford and Alice Rivlin, *Characteristics of Other Families*, paper presented at meeting of the Population Association of America, April 1963. See also Patience Lauriat, "The Effect of Marital Dissolution on Fertility," *Journal of Marriage and the Family*, August 1969.

RETIREMENT HISTORY STUDY REPLICATION

Now to move on to another data base. Because the CPS data used are scant and undoubtedly subject to error, they have been extended from several other sources. One such source is a longitudinal survey of the Social Security Administration—the Retirement History Study.[11]

That survey, begun in 1969 and scheduled for a 10-year run, ascertained at initial interviews the number of living brothers and sisters of the respondents. The study sample comprised married men living with their wives and some men and women without a spouse, all aged 58–63 at the time of the interview. For such a narrow age band the fact that some brothers or sisters were no longer living should not distort relationships. Respondents from that survey, classified by marital status, exhibit patterns strikingly similar to those already noted between size of childhood family, educational attainment, and income late in life. Money income of the respondent for 1968 has been used in lieu of poverty status. For married men, that means no acount is taken of the wife's income for the present analysis. Among married men with no living siblings, 28 percent had less than $5,000 income for the year and 27 percent had $10,000 or more. Of the husbands with four or more living brothers and sisters, 39 percent had less than $5,000 income for the year and only 18 percent had as much as $10,000.

With no siblings living, or only one, fewer than a third of the men had quit school at eighth grade or before; half had gone at least through high school. In contrast, with four or more living brothers or sisters, more than half had not gone beyond grade school and only a fourth had completed high school whether or not they had gone on to college. As table 14 shows, similar results are reported by the nonmarried respondents, men and women alike. Unfortunately, no information from the Retirement History Study about the wives was tabulated.

Respondents were not asked where they were born, but, curiously enough, classification by urbanization of current residence parallels for the number of siblings and educational attainment the CPS findings by urbanization of place of birth

[11] For a description of the survey, see Lola M. Irelan, "Retirement History Study: Introduction," *Social Security Bulletin*, November 1972.

TABLE 12.—Race and educational attainment: Percentage distribution of male household heads, by place of birth and number of siblings, March 1968

Age, number of siblings, and educational attainment [1]	Urbanization of place of birth [2]							
	All places [3]		Large city		Small city		Open country or farm	
	White	Black	White	Black	White	Black	White	Black
Under 35, total percent	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0
Elementary school only	9.7	17.3	4.2	6.9	9.3	16.0	19.4	31.3
Some high school	15.7	27.6	12.7	25.0	16.1	24.0	19.6	30.9
High school graduate	40.9	38.9	39.3	47.6	41.5	40.6	43.5	31.3
Any college	33.6	16.2	43.8	20.6	33.1	19.4	17.6	6.4
0–3 siblings, total percent	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0
Elementary school only	5.3	12.9	2.5	4.0	5.6	13.6	11.2	27.4
Some high school	11.9	21.5	10.2	21.8	11.9	19.5	15.0	23.8
High school graduate	40.5	41.5	37.6	49.2	40.5	39.8	48.7	35.7
Any college	42.3	24.1	49.7	25.0	41.8	27.1	25.1	13.1
4 siblings or more, total percent	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0
Elementary school only	18.3	20.6	10.1	9.7	16.5	17.6	27.0	33.1
Some high school	23.3	32.2	21.4	28.2	24.0	27.1	23.9	34.3
High school graduate	41.6	37.0	48.0	46.0	42.9	41.2	38.6	29.3
Any college	16.9	10.2	23.5	16.1	16.6	14.1	10.5	3.3
35–54, total percent	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0
Elementary school only	20.9	48.3	10.2	25.7	17.9	42.3	37.6	68.5
Some high school	18.1	24.3	16.5	24.3	18.2	29.2	19.2	19.0
High school graduate	33.7	18.2	34.5	25.7	35.4	20.8	29.7	8.9
Any college	27.3	9.2	38.9	24.3	28.6	7.7	13.5	3.5
0–3 siblings, total percent	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0
Elementary school only	12.0	40.9	6.6	24.8	10.7	31.6	25.6	66.1
Some high school	15.0	24.3	13.4	19.4	14.9	30.4	17.8	17.8
High school graduate	36.1	23.5	33.5	27.1	37.4	29.2	37.2	11.4
Any college	36.8	11.3	46.5	28.7	37.0	8.8	19.4	2.7
4 siblings or more, total percent	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0
Elementary school only	32.1	54.2	18.3	26.9	27.1	50.7	46.1	66.8
Some high school	21.9	24.2	23.4	31.2	22.3	28.3	20.0	19.6
High school graduate	30.7	14.1	36.8	23.7	32.8	14.2	25.0	7.7
Any college	15.4	7.5	21.6	18.3	17.8	6.8	9.8	4.0
55 and over, total percent	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0
Elementary school only	49.0	79.4	37.4	38.6	42.6	69.0	62.8	89.3
Some high school	16.1	9.0	19.2	19.3	17.1	16.7	13.6	5.5
High school graduate	19.0	6.6	21.0	26.3	21.7	6.2	14.8	2.5
Any college	15.9	5.1	22.3	15.8	18.6	8.1	8.9	2.8
0–3 siblings, total percent	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0
Elementary school only	37.4	70.3	29.7	(4)	32.6	56.5	49.7	87.4
Some high school	16.4	13.6	17.4	(4)	17.2	23.1	16.0	6.9
High school graduate	23.6	10.8	24.5	(4)	25.6	10.2	20.6	4.6
Any college	22.6	5.3	28.4	(4)	24.6	10.2	13.8	1.1
4 siblings or more, total percent	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0
Elementary school only	58.2	84.9	47.1	(4)	51.1	82.4	69.3	90.0
Some high school	15.9	6.2	21.5	(4)	16.9	9.8	12.4	4.9
High school graduate	15.4	4.0	16.7	(4)	18.3	2.0	11.9	1.7
Any college	10.5	4.9	14.7	(4)	13.6	5.9	6.4	3.4

[1] See table 4, footnote 1.
[2] See table 4, footnote 2.
[3] Includes residents of middle-size cities and suburbs near large city, not shown separately.
[4] Base too small to calculate percentages.

(table 15). Many older people continue to live not far from where they were born. Obviously, patterns of migration differ according to educational attainment and occupation, among other things, and they may well be different today from what was common when the survey respondents were starting on their careers. The nature of geographic mobility—or the lack of it—by age, sex, race, size of childhood family, and education, is something now planned for investigation from the CPS data already cited.

Conceivably, some of the legendary warmth and friendliness characterizing rural areas and small towns stems from the fact that more of the members from the large childhood families are likely to remain in small towns when they have set up housekeeping on their own. In any case, the fact that rural areas and small cities tend

TABLE 13.—Place of birth, number of siblings, and occupation: Percentage distribution of white male household heads working in 1967, by age

Place of birth [1] and occupation on longest job in 1967	Age of white male head, by number of siblings									
	Under 35					35–54				
	Total	0–1	2–3	4–5	6 or more	Total	0–1	2–3	4–5	6 or more
All places,[2] total percent	100	100	100	100	100	100	100	100	100	100
White-collar worker	43	54	46	35	24	45	59	51	38	31
Professional, managerial	30	39	32	23	13	33	45	38	27	22
Clerical, sales worker	13	15	14	12	11	12	14	13	11	9
Blue-collar worker	49	39	47	57	65	45	33	40	51	57
Service or farm worker	8	7	7	8	11	10	8	9	11	12
Large city, total percent	100	100	100	100	100	100	100	100	100	100
White-collar worker	54	60	57	39	40	59	68	62	52	37
Professional, managerial	37	44	37	27	23	44	52	45	37	27
Clerical, sales	17	16	20	12	17	15	16	17	15	10
Blue-collar worker	40	32	39	52	57	36	27	33	44	56
Service or farm worker	6	8	4	9	3	5	5	5	4	7
Small city, total percent	100	100	100	100	100	100	100	100	100	100
White-collar worker	42	52	45	35	27	47	60	52	38	34
Professional, managerial	30	40	31	24	17	35	46	39	28	24
Clerical, sales	12	12	14	11	11	12	14	13	10	10
Blue-collar worker	51	43	49	57	66	46	33	41	55	59
Service or farm worker	7	5	6	8	12	7	7	7	7	7
Farm, total percent	100	100	100	100	100	100	100	100	100	100
White-collar worker	27	34	33	24	20	29	31	34	26	26
Professional, managerial	18	21	25	14	12	21	23	27	18	19
Clerical, sales	9	13	8	10	8	8	8	7	8	7
Blue-collar worker	54	39	50	58	64	50	45	44	52	54
Service worker	3	5	2	3	4	4	3	4	5	4
Farm worker	16	22	15	15	12	17	21	17	17	16
Manager	12	20	13	10	7	15	21	15	15	13
Laborer	4	2	2	5	5	2	(3)	2	2	3

[1] See table 4, footnote 2.
[2] Includes residents in middle-size cities, open country, and suburbs near large city, not shown separately.
[3] Less than 0.05 percent.

to have adult populations with less formal schooling than residents of large cities means that incomes in those areas are likely to remain low. Thus, children born there may continue to lose out on their own educational opportunity unless special effort is made to enable them to stay in school longer.

APPLICATIONS

Just where does this quick statistical journey lead us or leave us? Are there any likely policy and program implications? From the technician's view, the data may put new snags in unraveling the problem of scaling or equivalence: How much does it take for a family to live at the same standard or equivalent level of satisfaction in one place compared with another? "Everybody knows it costs more" to live in a big city than a small city, or in one part of the country compared with another. Everybody, that is, but those of us concerned with the possible lack in small towns and rural areas of services and institutions that big city dwellers take for granted. That is one reason our present poverty lines incorporate no geographic adjustment; another is that there is yet no satisfactory way to measure the differential costs. The fact that there are usually fewer doctors and, in particular, fewer medical specialists and ancillary facilities is one obvious disadvantage that can render living in a small town or out-of-the-way place less of a bargain. It may be that lack of equal educational opportunity, for whatever reason, is another.

Then there are presumed to be economies of scale that make for lesser income needs per person among larger families. What about them? We all know that two once were supposed to live as cheaply as one. What that meant, presumably, is that once a household is established it takes less additional expense to add the second person than the first, the third than the second, etc. Some standards assuredly can't be the same for large families as for small: The number of ten-room mansions or apartments for large families is small at any price. Thus, the American luxury of a room to oneself may well have to be given up by children in large families for the presumed

TABLE 14.—Educational attainment, income in 1968, and place of residence in 1969: Percentage distribution of persons aged 58–63, by number of living siblings and marital status

Selected characteristics	Married men, wife present				Nonmarried men				Nonmarried women			
	Total	Living siblings			Total	Living siblings			Total	Living siblings		
		0–1	2–3	4 or more		0–1	2–3	4 or more		0–1	2–3	4 or more
Total respondents [1]	5,900	1,480	1,959	2,461	980	263	321	396	2,489	718	836	935
	Income in 1968											
Total percent	100	100	100	100	100	100	100	100	100	100	100	100
Less than $2,000	12	9	11	14	31	31	26	35	41	38	37	46
2,000–4,999	22	19	20	25	28	29	28	27	36	37	37	34
5,000–7,499	25	24	26	26	19	17	22	19	14	15	17	12
7,500–9,999	19	21	19	17	11	9	12	10	5	5	5	5
10,000 or more	22	27	24	18	11	14	12	9	4	6	4	3
	Educational attainment [2]											
Total percent	100	100	100	100	100	100	100	100	100	100	100	100
Elementary school only	44	32	40	54	53	41	50	64	42	34	42	50
Some high school	19	19	19	19	17	20	17	16	18	18	18	19
High school graduate or any college	37	49	41	27	30	39	34	20	39	48	40	31
	Urbanization of current residence, 1969											
Total percent	100	100	100	100	100	100	100	100	100	100	100	100
Persons residing in urban areas of—												
1 million or more	26	31	28	21	32	36	25	27	31	37	34	23
250,000–1 million	23	26	22	21	24	25	22	25	28	28	28	30
Less than 250,000	15	15	16	15	14	14	15	14	17	16	17	17
Rural residents	36	28	34	43	30	26	28	34	24	19	21	30

[1] Excludes respondents not reporting on income, number of living siblings, or school years completed.
[2] See table 4, footnote 1.

Source: Unpublished data from the Retirement History Study of the Social Security Administration.

joys of playing with one another. But is the opportunity for a good education and the economic benefits that go with it all that expendable? Though there is some question these days about the dollar-for-dollar return in income of additional years of education, in our credential society the high school diploma—and some schooling beyond—will still raise you up from poverty even if it won't make you rich. For those minorities of our society who remain especially vulnerable to low-income status, getting across that poverty line is no mean achievement.

POTENTIAL POLICY IMPLICATIONS

Moving from the technical side to other implications for policy, one can foresee the possibility for added import of this study. The past 15 years has brought for all Americans a heightened social consciousness, rising expectations, and the conviction that everyone has a right to a chance to share in the land of abundance.

Equal access, equal opportunity, nondiscrimination for reasons of race, sex, and ethnicity have become almost catchwords as various minorities step forward to claim their due. We may now have clarified as worthy of public concern another minority transcending and overlapping the more familiar categorization.

Many proposals, some worse, some better, have been made to ease the plight of those who do not fare so well, namely the aged, the large family of the working poor—and the nonworking poor—as well. Children's allowances and guaranteed incomes have not been popular in this country and may not ever be except under some other name. Time and changing customs are lowering American family size but also changing its composition. Along with a general reduction in the number of children per family, we are witnessing a larger and larger proportion of young families headed only by a woman, with all the attendant economic disadvantage. Wouldn't it be interesting if adequate provision for supporting and edu-

cating today's poor children could be achieved on the rationale that it would cut down the size of the poverty gap among the aged some years hence?

TABLE 15.—Place of residence in 1969, educational attainment, and income in 1968: Percentage distribution of persons aged 58–63, by number of siblings and marital status

Selected characteristics	Married men, wife present				Nonmarried men				Nonmarried women			
	Total	Living siblings			Total	Living siblings			Total	Living siblings		
		0–1	2–3	4 or more		0–1	2–3	4 or more		0–1	2–3	4 or more
	Residing in urban area of 1 million or more persons, 1969											
All respondents [1]	1,522	461	543	518	312	94	112	106	7,721	269	287	216
Income in 1968, total percent	100	100	100	100	100	100	100	100	100	100	100	100
Less than $2,000	5	5	5	5	22	27	17	14	31	29	32	32
2,000–4,999	13	14	13	13	211	22	19	23	39	39	37	40
5,000–7,499	26	24	27	27	26	21	35	22	19	21	19	16
7,500–9,999	23	23	22	24	14	11	18	15	6	4	6	8
10,000 or more	32	34	33	30	16	19	12	15	6	7	6	4
Educational attainment,[2] total percent	100	100	100	100	100	100	100	100	100	100	100	100
Elementary school only	38	28	37	46	45	41	37	58	40	32	42	47
Some high school	20	20	18	22	21	12	21	18	20	21	20	21
High school graduate or any college	42	52	45	32	34	47	42	24	40	47	38	32
	Residing in urban area of 250,000 persons, 1969											
All respondents [1]	332	387	432	513	236	65	72	99	703	198	230	275
Income in 1968, total percent	100	100	100	100	100	100	100	100	100	100	100	100
Less than $2,000	8	8	6	9	23	20	24	24	35	35	32	37
2,000–4,999	18	18	16	21	33	35	33	30	41	39	45	38
5,000–7,499	26	22	28	27	20	25	14	22	14	14	14	14
7,500–9,999	23	23	21	24	12	8	14	13	6	7	4	7
10,000 or more	25	29	29	19	12	12	15	10	5	5	5	4
Educational attainment,[2] total percent	100	100	100	100	100	100	100	100	100	100	100	100
Elementary school only	34	24	28	46	46	38	49	50	34	28	41	32
Some high school	22	20	22	24	21	24	19	19	20	13	19	26
High school graduate or any college	44	56	50	30	33	38	31	31	46	59	40	42
	Residing in urban area of less than 250,000 persons, 1969											
All respondents [1]	909	218	318	373	140	36	47	57	418	117	142	159
Income in 1968, total percent	100	100	100	100	100	100	100	100	100	100	100	100
Less than $2,000	10	6	11	10	35	33	25	44	43	39	46	48
2,000–4,999	22	19	23	23	29	36	32	23	33	39	27	35
5,000–7,499	26	25	27	27	16	6	19	21	15	11	20	13
7,500–9,999	20	21	18	21	9	11	11	7	6	5	9	3
10,000 or more	22	29	21	20	10	14	13	5	3	5	3	1
Educational attainment,[2] total percent	100	100	100	100	100	100	100	100	100	100	100	100
Elementary school only	43	31	42	51	59	39	62	70	46	37	37	60
Some high school	16	16	14	18	15	8	8	19	13	16	11	14
High school graduate or any college	41	53	44	31	26	54	30	11	41	47	52	26
	Rural residents, 1969											
All respondents [1]	2,137	414	666	1,057	292	68	90	134	5[illegible]	134	177	285
Income in 1968, total percent	100	100	100	100	100	100	100	100	100	100	100	100
Less than $2,000	20	16	19	22	45	46	38	49	59	58	51	64
2,000–4,999	30	25	28	34	30	28	33	29	28	28	32	25
5,000–7,499	24	26	23	24	13	10	14	13	8	8	13	6
7,500–9,999	12	15	15	10	6	9	4	7	3	2	2	3
10,000 or more	14	18	15	10	6	7	10	2	2	2	2	1
Educational attainment,[2] total percent	100	100	100	100	100	100	100	100	100	100	100	100
Elementary school only	55	43	50	63	64	47	59	77	53	44	46	61
Some high school	17	19	19	16	12	15	12	10	17	19	18	15
High school graduate or any college	28	38	31	21	24	38	29	13	30	37	36	24

[1] Excludes respondents not reporting on income, number of living siblings, or school years completed.
[2] See table 4, footnote 1.

Source: Unpublished data from the Retirement History Study of the Social Security Administration.

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